

## Yellow Buckeye (*Aesculus octandra* Marsh.)



Yellow buckeye (also called sweet buckeye or commonly, buckeye,) flourishes in rich coves of the southern Appalachians. It is only found outside the mountains in rich bottoms and moist uplands as a small tree and shrub.

Yellow buckeye **leaves** are opposite, palmately compound with five (sometimes seven) broad-oval, pointed leaflets 4 to 6 inches long. Leaflet margins are coarsely toothed. Leaves turn yellowish-brown in early autumn. **Flowers** are pale yellow and appear in erect panicles 5 to 6 inches long in April and May.

The **fruit** is a smooth-surfaced capsule 2 to 3 inches long, bearing one to two large, brown, shiny nuts 1 1/2 to 2 inches wide. Seeds contain a poisonous substance known as aesculin.

Occasionally, the **tree** will grow to 90 feet in height (commonly to 40 to 60 feet), with a tall, clean trunk 2 to 3 feet in diameter. It is the largest of the native buckeyes and is one of the first trees to leaf in spring. The **bark** is grayish brown, scaly and divided by shallow fissures. The **wood** is light, soft and close-grained. It is used for pulpwood, woodenware and sometimes for lumber.